His Majesties DECLARATION

To all His loving
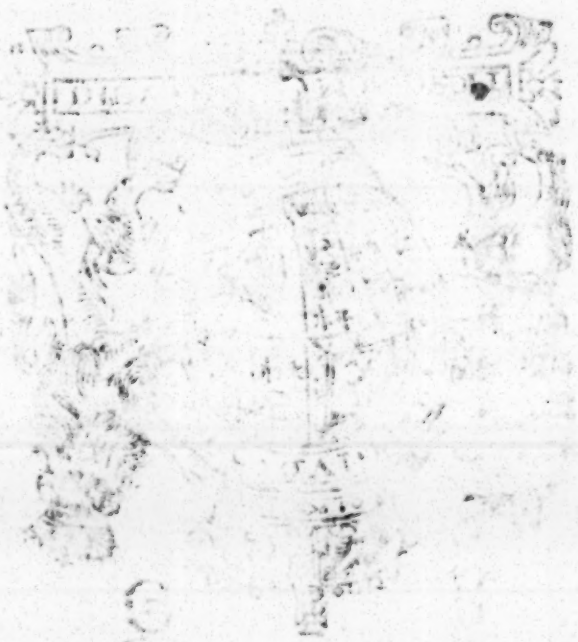
SUBJECTS.

December 26, 1662.

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His Majesties DECLARATION TO All His loving SUBJECTS,

Decemb. 26. 1662.

CHARLES R.

AS it hath pleased Almighty God so wonderfully to restore Us to the Throne of our Ancestors, and Our Subjects to happy Peace and Tranquillity, without the least Bloudshed by the Military Sword; so having still earnestly wished that both might be secured and maintained with the least effusion possible of the same by the Sword of Justice, as desiring much rather to cure the ill Intentions of the Disaffected by Our Clemency, then to punish the Effects of them by Rigour of Law:

We cannot but express Our great grief and trouble, That the Unpardonable, as well as Incurable Malignity of some should have carried them anew to such Traiterous practices

againſt our Perſon and Government, as have neceſſitated Us to make freſh Examples by the death of any more of Our Subjects. But as the Publickneſs of their Tryal in the ordinary courſe of Law, hath by their Conviction ſufficiently ſatisfied the World of the Enormity of their Crimes, ſo we have thought fit at the ſame time that we are forced to puniſh, to endeavour as much as in us lyeth, the preventing all occaſions of the like for the future by this Declaration; Wherein our principal aim is, to apply proper Antidotes to all thoſe Venemous Inſinuations, by which (as We are certainly informed) ſome of Our Subjects of Inveterate and unalterable ill Principles, do daily endeavour to poyſon the affections of our good People, by miſleading their Underſtandings, and that principally by four ſorts of moſt falſe and malicious Scandals, which we do look upon as the grounds of thoſe Traiterous Attempts.

The firſt, *by ſuggeſting unto them, That having attained Our ends in re-eſtabliſhing Our Regal authority, and gaining the power into Our own hands by a ſpecious Condeſcention to a general Act of Indemnity, We intend nothing leſs then the Obſervation of it; but on the contrary by degrees to ſubject the Perſons and Eſtates of all ſuch who ſtood in need of that Law to future revenge, and to give them up to the ſpoil of thoſe, who had loſt their Fortunes in our Service.*

Secondly, *That upon pretence of Plots and practices againſt Us, We intend to introduce a Military way of Government in this Kingdom.*

Thirdly, *That having made uſe of ſuch Solemn promiſes from* Breda, *and in ſeveral Declarations ſince, of eaſe and liberty to tender Conſciences, inſtead of performing any part of them, We have added ſtreighter fetters then ever, and new rocks of ſcandal to the ſcrupulous, by the Act of Uniformity.*

Fourthly and laſtly, We find it as artificially as maliciouſly divulged throughout the whole Kingdom, *That at the ſame time We deny a fitting liberty to thoſe other Sects of our Subjects, whoſe Conſciences will not allow them to conform to the Religion eſtabliſhed by Law; We are highly indulgent to Papiſts, not only in exempting them from the penalties of the Law, but even to ſuch a degree of Countenance and Incouragement, as may even endanger the Proteſtant Religion.*

Upon occaſion of all which wicked and malicious ſuggeſtions, althogh We are confident that the innate Loyalty and good

good Affections of the generality of our People, ſtrengthned by a due ſenſe of the late Calamities brought upon them by the ſame Arts, will hinder ſeeds of ſo deteſtable a nature from taking root, and bringing forth the fruits aimed at by the ſowers of them: Yet we think that in Our Fatherly care to prevent any miſ-leading of thoſe, who are ſo dear to Us, We owe unto them and to our ſelves this Publication of Our ſtedfaſt Reſolutions in all theſe particulars.

As to the firſt Point, concerning the Act of Indempnity; Certainly there can be no greater evidence, that the paſſing it proceeded from the Clemency of Our Nature, as well as from the preſent Conjuncture of that Parliament wherein it was firſt framed, then that We have been pleaſed to make it Our eſpecial care to have it confirmed by a New Act in this, a Parliament compoſed of Members ſo full of Affections to Our Perſon, and of Zeal for the Publique good, as We could never have cauſe to apprehend their Exacting from Us a Confirmation of any thing that had been before Extorted, or had at preſent been judged by Us prejudicial to either; and therefore as We not only conſented unto, but moſt earneſtly deſired the paſſing that Act at firſt; and confirming it ſince, as being no leſs conformable to Our Nature, then conducible to a happy Settlement: ſo We do hereby moſt ſolemnly renew unto all Our Subjects concerned in it, this Engagement, on the Word of a King, That it ſhall never be in the power of any Perſon or Intereſt whatſoever, to make Us decline from the Religious Obſervance of it; it having been alwayes a conſtant Profeſſion of Ours, That We do and ſhall ever think Our Royal Dignity and Greatneſs much more happily, and ſecurely founded on Our own Clemency and Our Subjects Loves, then in their Fears, and Our Power.

Which moſt ſincere Profeſſion of Ours may ſuffice alſo to expoſe the Wickedneſs and falſhood of the other malice concerning the deſign of introducing a way of Government by Military power.

It is true, that We ſhould not think We diſcharged rightly what We owe to the Publique Peace, and to the Freedom and Security of Parliaments, as well as to the Safety of Our Perſon, if whilſt We daily diſcover ſuch multitudes of diſtempered Minds, and ſuch dangerous Practices iſſuing from them, We ſhould for want of ſufficient Guards put it in the

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power of thoſe Rebellious Spirits to undertake probably at any time, what they have at ſeveral times ſo madly attempted for the ruine and deſtruction of us all. Of which certainly, beſides the preſent occaſion of new Precaution as well as new Severity, We ſuppoſe all our good Subjects need not a livelier nor more moving inſtance, than what their memories can furniſh them with, from the deſperate undertaking of *Venner* and his Crew, which (as mad as it was) We leave to all the World to judge, of how dangerous a Conſequence it might have been, without that little ſtrength remaining of thoſe Forces, which (to give Our People a Teſtimony of Gur founding all Our ſecurity rather in their Affections then in any military Power) we had ſo frankly Disbanded, and which afterwards by advice of Our Council, meerly upon motives of the Publique Safety, VVe conſented to increaſe to that moderate Proportion, which was indeed abſolutely neceſſary, and hath ſince been ſufficiently proved to be ſo, by the ſecurity which we owe to them from the late dangerous practices.

But the reaſons of ſuch Precautions once ceaſing, we are very ſure, that what Guards ſoever may be found neceſſary for Us to continue, as in former times, for the Dignity and Honour of Our Crown; the ſole Strength and Security we ſhall ever confide in, ſhall be the Hearts and Affections of Our Subjects, indeared and confirmed to Us by Our Gracious and ſteady manner of Government, according to the Ancient known Laws of the Land; there being not any one of Our Subjects, who doth more from his heart abhor, then we Our Selves, all ſort of Military and Arbitrary Rule.

As for the Third concerning the Non-performance of Our Promiſes, we remember well the very words of thoſe from *Breda*;

Viz. *We do Declare a Liberty to Tender Conſciences, and that no Man ſhall be diſquieted or called in queſtion for differences of Opinion in matters of Religion, which do not diſturb the Peace of the Kingdom; and that We ſhall be ready to conſent to ſuch an Act of Parliament, as upon mature deliberation ſhall be offered to Us for the full granting that Indulgence.*

We remember well the Confirmations We have made of them ſince upon ſeveral occaſions in Parliament; and as all theſe things are ſtill freſh in Our Memory; ſo are we ſtill firm in the reſolution of performing them to the full. But it muſt

not

not be wondred at, (since that Parliament, to which those Promises were made in relation to an Act, never thought fit to offer Us any to that purpose) that being so zealous as we are (and by the grace of God shall ever be) for the maintenance of the true Protestant Religion, finding it so shaken, (not to say overthrown) as we did, We should give its establishment the precedency before matters of Indulgence to Dissenters from it. But that once done, (as we hope it is sufficiently by the Bill of Uniformity) we are glad to lay hold on this occasion to renew unto all Our Subjects concerned in those Promises of Indulgence by a true tenderness of Conscience, this assurance:

That as in the first place we have been Zealous to settle the Uniformity of the Church of *England*, in Discipline, Ceremony and Government, and shall ever constantly maintain it:

So as for what concerns the Penalties upon those who (living peaceably) do not conform thereunto through scruple and tenderness of misguided Conscience, but modestly and without scandal perform their devotions in their own way, we shall make it Our special Care so far forth as in Us lies, without invading the Freedom of Parliament, to incline their wisdom at this next approaching Sessions, to concur with us in the making some such Act for that purpose, as may enable Us to exercise with a more universal satisfaction, that Power of Dispensing, which we conceive to be inherent in Us. Nor can we doubt of their chearful co-operating with Us in a thing wherein we do conceive Our selves so far engaged, both in Honour, and in what we owe to the Peace of Our Dominions, which we profess we can never think secure, whilst there shall be a colour left to the malicious and disaffected to inflame the minds of so many multitudes upon the score of Conscience, with despair of ever obtaining any effect of Our Promises for their Ease.

In the last place, as to that most pernicious and injurious Scandal, so artificially spread and fomented, of Our Favour to Papists; as it is but a Repetition of the same detestable Arts, by which all the late Calamities have been brought upon this Kingdom in the time of Our Royal Father of Blessed Memory, (who, though the most Pious and Zealous Protestant that ever Reigned in this Nation, could never wash off the stains cast upon him by that malice, but by his Martyrdom.) We conceive all Our Subjects should be sufficiently

ently prepared against that poyson by memory of those di-
ſasters; eſpecially ſince nothing is more evident, then that
the wicked Authors of this ſcandal are ſuch as ſeek to involve
all good Proteſtants under the odious name of Papiſts, or
Popiſhly affected: Yet we cannot but ſay upon this occaſion;
that Our Education, and courſe of Life in the true Prote-
ſtant Religion hath been ſuch, and Our Conſtancy in the
Profeſſion of it ſo eminent in Our moſt deſperate condition
abroad among Roman Catholick Princes, when as the ap-
pearance of receding from it had been the likelieſt way in all
humane forecaſt, to have procured Us the moſt powerful
Aſſiſtances of Onr Re-eſtabliſhment, that ſhould any of Our
Subjects give but the leaſt admiſſion of that ſcandal into their
beliefs, We ſhould look upon it as the moſt impardonable of-
fence that they can be guilty of towards Us. 'Tis true, that
as We ſhall alwayes according to Juſtice retain, ſo We think
it may become Us to avow to the World a due ſenſe We have
of the greateſt part of Our Roman Catholick Subjects of this
Kingdom, having deſerved well from Our Royal Father of
Bleſſed Memory, and from Us, and even from the Prote-
ſtant Religion it ſelf, in adhering to Us with their Lives and
Fortunes for the maintenance of Our Crown in the Religion
eſtabliſhed, againſt thoſe who under the name of zealous Pro-
teſtants, imployed both Fire and Sword to overthrow them
both. We ſhall with as much freedom profeſs unto the
World, that it is not in Our Intention to exclude Our Ro-
man Catholick Subjects, who have ſo demeaned themſelves,
from all ſhare in the benefit of ſuch an Act, as in purſuance of
Our promiſes, the Wiſdom of Our Parliament ſhall think fit to
offer unto Us for the eaſe of Tender Conſciences. It might
appear no leſs then Injuſtice, that thoſe who deſerved well,
and continued to do ſo, ſhould be denyed ſome part of that
mercy, which We have obliged Our Self to afford to ten
times the number of ſuch who have not done ſo. Beſides, ſuch
are the capital Laws in force againſt them, as though juſtified
in their rigour by the times wherein they were made, We
profeſs it would be grievous unto Us to conſent to the Exe-
cution of them, by putting any of Our Subjects to death for
their Opinions in matter of Religion only. But at the ſame
time that We Declare Our little liking of thoſe Sanguinary
ones; and Our Gracious Intentions already expreſſed to ſuch
of Our Roman Catholick Subjects as ſhall live peaceably, mo-
deſtly,

deſtly and without ſcandal; We would have them all know, that if for doing what their Duties and Loyalties obliged them to; or from Our acknowledgment of their well-deſerving, they ſhall have the preſumption to hope for a Teleration of their Profeſſion, or a taking away either thoſe marks of diſtinction, or of Our Diſpleaſure, which in a well-governed Kingdom ought alwayes to be ſet upon Diſſenters from the Religion of the State, or to obtain the leaſt remiſſion in the Strictneſs of thoſe Laws, which either are, or ſhall be made to hinder the ſpreading of their Doctrine, to the prejudice of the true Proteſtant Religion; or that upon Our expreſsing (according to Chriſtian charity) Our diſlike of Bloodſhed for Religion only, Prieſts ſhall take the boldneſs to appear and avow themſelves to the offence and ſcandal of good Proteſtants, and of the Laws in force againſt them; they ſhall quickly find, We know as well to be ſevere, when Wiſdom requires, as Indulgent when charity and ſence of Merit challenge it from us.

With this We have thought fit to arm Our good Subjects minds againſt the practices of Our ill ones, by a true knowledge of Our own; of which now rightly perſwaded, We make no queſtion, but that whoſoever they be from whom they can derive the ſpreading or fomenting of any of thoſe wicked ſuggeſtions, they will look upon them with deteſtation, as the moſt dangerous Enemies of Our Crown, and of the Peace and Happineſs of the Nation; And that what We have here publiſhed, will happily prepare them all to a chearful expectation of the approaching Seſſions of Parliament, an aſſembly ſo eminent in their Loyalty, and their Zeal for the Peace and Proſperity of Our Kingdoms, that having already made thoſe happy Settlements for the maintenance of the Religion eſtabliſhed, and of Our juſt Rights, their full concurrence with Us, can no way be doubted in the performance of all Our promiſes, and to the effecting all thoſe Gracious Intentions which (God knows) Our heart is full of, for the Plenty, Proſperity and univerſal ſatisfaction of the Nation.

In Order to which, although it be forreign to the main ſcope of this Our Declaration, which is principally to prevent the miſchiefs aimed at by the ſcandals therein mentioned, and that wherein we reſerve the enlargement of Our ſelf till the opening of the next Seſſions of Parliament, yet we cannot ſo far hinting here unto Our good Subjects Four particulars,

ently prepared against that poyson by memory of those disasters; especially since nothing is more evident, then that the wicked Authors of this scandal are such as seek to involve all good Protestants under the odious name of Papists, or Popishly affected. Yet we cannot but say upon this occasion, that Our Education, and course of Life in the true Protestant Religion hath been such, and Our Constancy in the Profession of it so eminent in Our most desperate condition abroad among Roman Catholick Princes, when as the appearance of receding from it had been the likelieſt way in all humane forecast, to have procured Us the most powerful Assistances of Our Re-establishment, that should any of Our Subjects give but the least admission of that scandal into their beliefs, We should look upon it as the most impardonable offence that they can be guilty of towards Us. 'Tis true, that as We shall alwayes according to Justice retain, so We think it may become Us to avow to the World a due sense We have of the greatest part of Our Roman Catholick Subjects of this Kingdom, having deserved well from Our Royal Father of Blessed Memory, and from Us, and even from the Protestant Religion it self, in adhering to Us with their Lives and Fortunes for the maintenance of Our Crown in the Religion established, against those who under the name of zealous Protestants, imployed both Fire and Sword to overthrow them both. We shall with as much freedom profess unto the World, that it is not in Our Intention to exclude Our Roman Catholick Subjects, who have so demeaned themselves, from all share in the benefit of such an Act, as in pursuance of Our promises, the Wisdom of Our Parliament shall think fit to offer unto Us for the ease of Tender Consciences. It might appear no less then Injustice, that those who deserved well, and continued to do so, should be denyed some part of that mercy, which We have obliged Our Self to afford to ten times the number of such who have not done so. Besides, such are the capital Laws in force against them, as though justified in their rigour by the times wherein they were made, We profess it would be grievous unto Us to consent to the Execution of them, by putting any of Our Subjects to death for their Opinions in matter of Religion only. But at the same time that We Declare Our little liking of those Sanguinary ones, and Our Gracious Intentions already expressed to such of Our Roman Catholick Subjects as shall live peaceably, modestly,

deſtly and without ſcandal; We would have them all know, that if for doing what their Duties and Loyalties obliged them to; or from Our acknowledgment of their well-deſerving, they ſhall have the preſumption to hope for a Toleration of their Profeſſion, or a taking away either thoſe marks of diſtinction, or of Our Diſpleaſure, which in a well-governed Kingdom ought alwayes to be ſet upon Diſſenters from the Religion of the State, or to obtain the leaſt remiſſion in the Strictneſs of thoſe Laws, which either are, or ſhall be made to hinder the ſpreading of their Doctrine, to the prejudice of the true Proteſtant Religion; or that upon Our expreſsing (according to Chriſtian charity) Our diſlike of Bloodſhed for Religion only, Prieſts ſhall take the boldneſs to appear and avow themſelves to the offence and ſcandal of good Proteſtants, and of the Laws in force againſt them; they ſhall quickly find, We know as well to be ſevere, when Wiſdom requires, as Indulgent when charity and ſence of Merit challenge it from us.

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wherein we think to give them the moſt important marks of Our care. Firſt, *In puniſhing by ſevere Laws that licentiouſneſs and impiety, which ſince the diſſolution of Government, We find to Our great grief, hath overſpread the Nation.* Secondly, *As well by Sumptuary Laws, as by Our own Example of Frugality, to reſtrain the exceſs in mens expences, which is grown ſo general and ſo exorbitant, beyond all bounds, either of their qualities or fortunes.* Thirdly, *So to perfect what we have already induſtriouſly begun in the retrenching of all Our own ordinary and extraordinary Charges in Navy, Garriſons, Houſhold, and all their dependants, as to bring them withi the compaſs of Our ſetled Revenue, that thereby Our Subjects may have little cauſe to apprehend Our frequent preſſing them for new Aſſiſtances. And laſtly, ſo to improve the good Conſequences of theſe three particulars to the advancement of Trade, that all Our Subjects finding (as well as other Nations envying) the advantage this hath of them in that prime foundation of Plenty, they may all with minds happily compoſed by Our Clemency and Indulgence, (inſtead of taking up thoughts of deſerting their Profeſſions, or Tranſplanting) apply themſelves comfortably, and with redoubled induſtry to their ſeveral Vocations, in ſuch manner as the private Intereſt of every one in particular may encourage him to contribute chearfully to the general Proſperity.*

Given at Our Court at *Whitehall*, this Twenty ſixth day of *December*, in the Fourteenth Year of Our Reign.